

Russia “plunging world’s poorest further into despair” – Foreign Secretary to tell G7 partners

- The Foreign Secretary will meet G7 partners in Münster, Germany this week
- He will use the talks to call out the impact of Russia’s war on civilians in Ukraine and around the world, and the need to sustain Ukraine’s self-defence
- This follows Russia’s weaponisation of food, water and energy, and its missile and drone strikes against Ukraine’s energy infrastructure

As Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine causes widespread devastation, its global impact continues to generate lasting damage to the world’s most vulnerable – driving up food and energy prices and putting supplies at risk. To discuss the international response, the Foreign Secretary James Cleverly is in Germany today (3 November) for the G7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Münster.

The Foreign Secretary will say that the G7 must work with partners across the world in the face of Russian aggression and the resulting economic insecurity, building resilience against Putin’s weaponisation of energy, food and water.

James Cleverly will say that Putin’s exploitation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative shows his willingness to hold the world’s vulnerable hostage.

On Saturday, Russia said it was suspending its participation in the initiative, which allows food vital to developing countries to be exported safely from Ukraine. On Wednesday, it resumed participation. From the first ship leaving Odesa on 1 August, nearly 10 million tonnes of grain have been exported under the initiative.

This deliberate uncertainty caused by Russia raises fears around the security of food supply. The UK and its allies continue to urge Russia to agree an extension to the UN-brokered deal beyond its 19 November deadline.

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

While we are steadfast in our support for Ukraine, we must not forget that the impacts of Russia’s aggression, interference and hostility extend across the world.

Putin's actions are plunging the world's poorest further into despair, putting global food security on the brink and pushing up energy prices.

These actions only serve to demonstrate Putin's true intentions and further unite the international community against his callous plans.

Germany has also invited Ghana, Kenya and the African Union to join the meeting for discussions on collaboration with the G7 on climate change, infrastructure, defending democracy and addressing conflict and humanitarian crises.

Also on the agenda for the G7 will be the growing protests in Iran, stability in the Indo-Pacific, and the role of China in the wider world.

The Foreign Ministers will discuss the situation in Taiwan, particularly following the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party last month, and how the G7 can strengthen partnerships with countries in the region to build prosperity and protect shared values.

Before arriving in Münster, the Foreign Secretary will represent the UK at the Berlin Process Summit on the Western Balkans, where he will call for a joint response to Russia's destabilising actions in the region, including taking steps to reduce the region's reliance on Russian energy.

Skills for Prosperity Helps Opening STEM Centre in Oaxaca

As part of the Skills for Prosperity programme (SFPMX Mexico), His Majesty's Ambassador to Mexico, Jon Benjamin, officially inaugurated the STEM Centre at the Technological University of the Central Valley of Oaxaca (TUCVO). This university is located in the heart of one of Mexico's states with the highest levels of poverty.

Skills for Prosperity is a development programme of the UK government that focuses on improving the access of marginalised youth to quality and market-aligned vocational training and higher education. Through this initiative and thanks to co-funding from the University and the Iberoamerican STEM Academy, a non-governmental organisation, the Ambassador Jon Benjamin unveiled a plaque to officially inaugurate the STEM Centre at the Technological University of the Central Valley of Oaxaca.

The Centre will provide assistance and technological support to at least

1,700 students interested in deepening their knowledge in science, technology, engineering and maths. This is of special relevance considering the high levels of poverty in Zimatlan, the rural community where the university is located which has a strong indigenous presence and difficult physical access.

For this initiative, the TUCVO invested £15,000 in building the Centres' facilities and the SFPMX invested close to £80,000 in capacity building for the University through trainings and technical certifications to professors. This included soft skills training highlighting the importance of breaching the gap for women in science. The Iberoamerican STEM Academy invested nearly £80,000 to equip the robotics, automation and programming classrooms of the Centre and the Oaxaca State Government will also participate in this initiative by providing additional equipment worth £100,000.

During the unveiling ceremony of the Centre, the Ambassador Jon Benjamin awarded the teachers certifications for having completed these courses, and had the opportunity to meet some of the students that have already benefited from the STEM Centre through its courses on robotics and programming.

The STEM Centre is equipped with computers for programming in languages such as Python (used to build websites and software), robotic arms and other technical components. The Centre had already benefited students even before its inauguration, by providing the necessary equipment and training that allowed a group of students to participate in the 2022 National Robotics and STEM Skills Championship. Even though this was the first time that students from the TUCVO had the opportunity to participate in this competition, the team won the first place in the category of collaborative robotic arms.

Ramsés García, a student of mechatronics at TUCVO said:

The equipment and computer systems in the Centre allow us to have practical experience of the acquired knowledge, and are focused to the labour market demands. I feel grateful to the TUCVO and the UK Government for offering this opportunity to further my skills.

Similarly, Emilia Ramírez shared:

Here I am learning how to programme in Python language, build small robots and how to operate advance robotic arms used to automatize manufacturing processes.

Through the creation of the STEM Centre at the Technological University of the Central Valley of Oaxaca, the Skills for Prosperity programme seeks to bring women and vulnerable populations in remote regions of Oaxaca closer to fields of study such as robotics, industrial design and software programming, therefore contributing to the reduction of local employment gaps for marginalised youth in Mexico.

The Iranian people will no longer tolerate violence and oppression

Thank you Chair. On behalf of the United Kingdom let me pay tribute to the powerful briefing we have heard today from our three briefers.

The death of Mahsa “Jina” Amini was a tragedy. She was not the first young woman to die needlessly at the hands of the Iranian regime. Nor, sadly, will she be the last. But her death and the bravery of so many ordinary Iranians since then have changed Iran.

What we have seen in the six weeks since Mahsa’s death has been extraordinary. Years of grief, fear and frustration at the hands of an oppressive regime have spilled into the streets.

This is an authentic, grassroots call for change.

People in Iran have had their rights and voices ignored for too long.

We stand in solidarity and awe at their extraordinary bravery standing up to the authorities.

Their message is clear: the Iranian people will no longer tolerate violence and oppression.

The situation is entirely of the Iranian regime’s own making. Its human rights record has been dire for years.

Iran’s brutal crackdown on protests has appalled the world. We have seen with our own eyes the footage of police violently beating protestors. We’ve seen numerous reports of authorities using live ammunition on crowds.

The Iranian regime’s narrative around these incidents – that external actors are to blame for the unrest – is a flagrant attempt to distract the world.

But the regime knows the truth.

Its attempts to stifle the voices of its people by restricting internet access, blocking apps and jamming satellite broadcasts shows us that the regime is frightened of what ordinary Iranians think.

A confident government does not cut off its people from basic services, accurate reporting and the vital ability to connect with one another.

The Iranian regime has tried to blame everybody but themselves for what’s going on. It’s time they take responsibility and listen to their people.

The people of Iran have been clear that the regime cannot continue as it has.

It must now demonstrate real change.

As my Foreign Secretary said on the 17th October, there is a place in the international community for a responsible Iran, one that respects the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

For the sake of Iran's peace and security – and its future standing in the world – it is time for the regime to make the right move.

[Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress since 1995, but its hard won peace remains fragile and under pressure](#)

Thank you President, and first may I join others in welcoming the unanimous adoption of the resolution renewing the mandate of EUFOR Operation Althea. And I want to pay particular tribute and appreciation to Ireland's role as penholder on the text. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress since 1995, but its hard won peace remains fragile and under pressure. EUFOR's presence continues to play an indispensable role in ensuring a safe and secure environment.

Second, we would like to thank High Representative Schmidt for his latest report, and we look forward to welcoming him in future meetings. He and his office continue to play a crucial role, and have the UK's support, including for the use of his executive powers should the situation require it.

We would like to congratulate all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 2 October elections. These were, overall, peaceful and democratic. But instances of fraud must be investigated and prosecuted. And we also regret further instances of dangerous, divisive and secessionist rhetoric. These must stop.

But only half the work is done. We urge the relevant actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to prioritise collaboration and cooperation over political obstructionism to ensure the election results are implemented swiftly and effectively.

In this regard, we note the executive actions taken by the High Representative in the run up to and following the elections. It is clear from the report that these were tough decisions and that the High Representative did not take them lightly. We understand that in some quarters, these decisions were considered controversial. But it is clear that they were made to amend a dysfunctional status quo that benefitted few. His actions were

designed to improve governance to benefit all in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm the UK's commitment to the Dayton Peace Agreement and its structures. We welcome all work towards meeting the conditions set out for their closure, including the 5+2 Criteria. We remain an active member of the Peace Implementation Council in support of the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, sovereign state, comprising two entities.

We urge all actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to set aside narrow interests, and focus instead on improving the quality of life for all citizens, and making progress on the agreed aim of Euro-Atlantic integration. Thank you Mr President.

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